

NYC Sticky Pecan Buns

I was introduced to these heavenly sticky treats when I was studying at the American Institute of Baking. Caramel, pecans, rich sweet soft bun . . . they are outrageous and so, so decadent. They are just as good on day three as on day one.

MAKES 12 LARGE BUNS

DOUGH

15g (5 tsp) instant dry yeast, mixed to a slurry with a little flour and water
500g (3 cups) strong bread flour
10g (2 tsp) salt
100g (scant ½ cup) butter
75g (generous ⅓ cup) sugar
1 medium egg
260ml (1 cup) milk, at 30°C (86°F)

CINNAMON SUGAR FILLING

45g (scant ¼ cup) sugar
45g (scant ¼ cup) brown sugar
5g (1½ tsp) ground cinnamon

STICKY BUN GLAZE

200g (1 cup) brown sugar
100g (scant ½ cup) butter
pinch of salt
80g (scant ¼ cup) honey
½ tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp ground cinnamon

120g (scant 1 cup) chopped pecans or walnuts



Place all dough ingredients in a large mixing bowl and, using a wooden spoon, combine to form a dough. Tip dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead for 15 minutes, resting it for 1 minute every 2–3 minutes, until it is smooth and elastic. The dough should not be too soft – it needs to be a little firm so that it holds its shape during the folding, twisting and shaping stage. Put it in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave in a warm place for 45 minutes.

Tip dough onto the work surface and gently deflate by folding it onto itself three or four times, then return it to the bowl, cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave for another 30 minutes.

While dough is rising, make the sticky bun glaze. Very gently melt all the ingredients together in a saucepan over a low heat until the sugar is dissolved. Do not boil! Grease two 6-hole Texas muffin tins (pans) well with butter or non-stick spray. Place 2 tablespoons (approximately 30g/1¼oz) of sticky bun glaze in the bottom of each muffin hole, then approximately 10g (3 teaspoons) of chopped pecan or walnuts on top.

Mix cinnamon sugar ingredients together in a small bowl.

Tip dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Using a rolling pin, roll out to a 45cm x 35cm (17in x 14in) rectangle. Arrange it so a long edge is facing you. Brush dough lightly with water, then sprinkle cinnamon sugar evenly over, leaving 1cm (½in) free at the bottom long edge.

Starting at the top edge, roll dough towards you, keeping the roll tight and even. Seal at the bottom edge. Lengthen the log to 50cm (20in) by rolling it. Using a large chef's knife, cut the roll into 12 even slices, approximately 4cm (1½in) thick. Place each dough piece in a muffin hole, with the spiral cut side sitting on the sticky bun glaze. Cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave to rise for about 1 hour at room temperature, until doubled in size and light in texture.

When buns have risen, remove clingfilm (plastic wrap) and place trays (sheets) directly into a preheated 200°C/400°F/Gas 6 oven. Bake for 15–20 minutes until light golden brown. Remove from oven. Wait 1 minute, then tip the muffin pan upside down and allow the buns to fall out onto the baking tray (cookie sheet). Be careful – the sticky toffee glaze will be extremely hot! Allow to cool, then serve.